**Interview with C. J. S. "Jack" Durham (1905-1991)**
**about the Fairfax County History Commission**
**Conducted by Ross Netherton on October 18, 1987**

**[start of transcription]**

**Netherton:** This is Ross Netherton and today is October 18th, 1987.

**Durham:** Excuse me isn't it the 17th?

**Netherton:** The 17th was yesterday.

**Durham:** Was it? Alright I'll have to adjust my watch. Okay.

**Netherton:** The 17th was Saturday.

**Durham:** Well it's either the 17th or 18th.

**Netherton:** It's either the 17th or 18th, but we agree it's 1987.

**Durham:** Yeah.

**Netherton:** And I'm with Jack Durham, C. J. S. Durham in his home at Towlston Grange in Fairfax County. He's agreed to be interviewed for the Fairfax County History Commission on the history and activities of the commission. Jack, for the record and for my recollection here, when did you begin to serve on the Fairfax County History Commission even though it wasn't named that at the time?

**Durham:** Yeah.

**Netherton:** It was the predecessor of the present commission which was called the Fairfax County Historic Landmarks Preservation Commission, if I recall.

**Durham:** Well, Ross, of course I don't remember something that happened twenty years ago, but it was among the very first days of the– I should think, of the Historic Landmarks Commission's existence.

**Netherton:** Were you present at the creation as the saying goes?

**Durham:** As Dean Acheson entitled his memoirs, I was pretty much present at the creation. The idea came from Bayard Evans owner of the restaurant at McLean now called Evans Farm Inn. I suppose it was called that then? Yes, it was.

**Netherton:** Yes.

**Durham:** And or some man in the business community, other business community, I'm not sure which. Anyway, Bayard was a member of the business community and a very successful one and he was able therefore to get the support, a large measure of support I should say, from the business community.

**Netherton:** Support for what and what was the–

**Durham:** Well in the beginning, he had hoped it would be financial support for the reconstruction or rehabilitation and repair of such historic landmarks as the commission would approve or authenticate.

**Netherton:** Was there any particular event or any particular landmark that was threatened or had actually succumbed to demolition that started off this interest and this effort to organize some group to do something about preservation?

**Durham:** Well I don't recall that there was any particular landmark that was outstanding in the minds of some or most of us on the commission. I know that there were two. One was called– what was the name of that house that they knocked down for the Tysons development? That old– Maplewood.

**Netherton:** Maplewood. It was a French Second-Empire house that really was the only one of its kind in Northern Virginia and a real landmark for most of the people who had been around here for very long.

**Durham:** At one time or another you will run into the fact that we, the commission– it may have been the Landmarks Commission itself and the supervisor from our district Anthony Bradley, United States Park Service and other bodies were double-crossed in the connection with Maplewood. We had been promised that the development there that Maplewood would not be destroyed. That it would remain. But over the weekend under cover of darkness it was knocked down and destroyed. The owner had a demolition permit in his pocket when he met with us about it. That's on the public record and another one was the old Colvin Run Mill at Colvin Run. This was a particular favorite of Bayard Evans and he thought he could almost go up there with a hammer and saw and restore it himself. Well Bayard was skillful in many ways, but he was not a very good carpenter. He

wanted to do things as cheaply as you could which is of course a valuable attitude to have but in preservation work the cheapest way is not always the best way.

**Netherton:** Well how would you look back on the beginning of the commission now? Was it as you look back on it a strictly home-grown result of local people being aroused, concerned, and even in the case of Maplewood, shocked by some of the demolitions or were there outside influences like, for example, the National Historic Preservation Act and all of the national publicity and awareness that was being generated by an interest in historic preservation all across the country? Or was it a combination of both or something in between?

**Durham:** Well I would have to say it was a combination of both because I believe the Historic Landmarks Commission was set up in 1965, wasn't it?

**Netherton:** Yes, late [19]65.

**Durham:** And then it went over in 1969.

**Netherton:** And of course the national legislation was 1966.

**Durham:** 1966. 1966. So we set it up in 1965 and the national legislation came along a year later. So that I think you would have to say it was a combination of both local and national interest. Of course, the preservation movement nationally and in particularly in the northeast and the eastern part of the country had been– the movement you might call it even then had been in existence for a long time. I don't know exactly when the National Historic Preservation Trust was set up, but it was some many years prior to the setting up of the county, the local county commission.

**Netherton:** And of course, Virginia had its own legislation authorizing local government activities like the commission would have been a few years before the national legislation. I'm not really sure when the General Assembly passed that law but I think it was very definitely in not the late [19]50s but it was early [19]60s.

**Durham:** No.

**Netherton:** But we did have people here in this county who also became involved in the Landmarks Preservation Commission who were aware of the national developments. We were not an isolated island here in Fairfax County as I recall it. So they definitely knew about which way the wind was beginning to blow and also about the increasing level of consciousness of the country about preservation.

**Durham:** Yes, that's quite true.

**Netherton:** You agree with that?

**Durham:** I agree with that and it was also part of the conservation of natural resources movement too, I believe because the conservation of natural resources emphasized the preserving of valuable natural areas.

**Netherton:** Did we have something in the county that particularly stood out there in the conservation field, setting aside wilderness or open space and park land? I can't remember exactly. It seems to me that Fairfax County was also at the same time moving ahead on this matter of conservation as you just reminded us here.

**Durham:** Yes, it was. I helped organize the Fairfax County Park Service and the Northern Virginia Park Service. Both cases. I had also been working with national leaders of the conversation movement. Men like Dr. Ira Gabrielson of the Wildlife Institute. Men like Benton MacKaye president of the Wilderness Society and a handful of other organizations including now the Nature Conservancy which is a national organization. It has a state chapter. Well all this was in the air you see, and the two mindsets sort of interlocked with each other. However, on the strictly preservation of historic landmarks, I think too much cannot be said in recognition of the valuable work that the people did, particularly the women did in preserving George Washington's homeplace quite early in this century and perhaps even toward the close of the last century. I can't remember her name, but I believe she was a crippled woman.

**Netherton:** Pamela Cunningham I want to say?

**Durham:** What?

**Netherton:** Pamela Cunningham was it?

**Durham:** I believe that's it, yeah. Also, George Mason's beautiful Gunston Hall.

**Netherton:** Was it important that we had in the county examples of that sort, do you think? Setting a good example of what could be done if really dedicated efforts were made?

**Durham:** Well I think so indeed. Of course it cut both ways. People said, well look, what else is left? You got the two best houses in the country here and you're working on that. Well of course the fact of the matter is that both houses were in

dreadful shape and beyond that there were many other smaller houses belonging to less famous men that should be preserved too.

**Netherton:** Well that must've posed a dilemma to the people who were getting together in this Landmark Preservation Commission because wouldn't one of their first problems have been the matter of selecting what their targets would be or what the scope of their activities would be directed at?

**Durham:** Exactly so.

**Netherton:** How did they approach that?

**Durham:** In my view, and it's not an extremist view, but I think every structure that built should be preserved as if it has some connections with the indigenous building style of the area or some connection with a distinguished man or woman in the area or in the state or nation. And of course, as we built up our registry of houses and other sites and houses and sites to preserve, why we– the list got longer and longer and longer.

**Netherton:** Okay Jack, now you're getting–

**Durham:** I'm getting a little bit ahead.

**Netherton:** You're moving too fast for me because you just touched two things that are extremely important. One is, seems to me, the matter of the standards that were developed and applied, this matter of this selection of the landmarks that the commission would attempt to save if that turned out to be what was necessary. The second thing is you might say the implementation of this idea of these criteria, that through making a list of the registry as you call them, how did the new Landmarks Commission approach those problems if you want to call them that? Or those functions that they had to perform?

**Durham:** Well actually at the very beginning we were babes in the woods. There were very few places to which we could turn to get definite criteria about the preservation. But still, there were sources all right enough and we had the help of a– and there were people who had been trained in the preservation of architectural gems you might say and houses.

**Netherton:** Did you have them in the county so you could recruit them to the commission?

**Durham:** We had one.

**Netherton:** Or did you have to go to Washington to the National Trust?

**Durham:** We found one. His name was Tony–

**Netherton:** Tony Wrenn?

**Durham:** Tony what?

**Netherton:** Wrenn.

**Durham:** Tony Wrenn. Tony was– I forget now his qualifications, but he was very knowledgeable about these things.

**Netherton:** At that time, I think he was working for the National Trust in their archives and in connection with the Historic American Buildings Survey.

**Durham:** That may be. And of course, also, we could turn to the National Park Service with their, for their survey of American buildings which you just mentioned. But I'm talking now at the very beginning. It was a rocky start. It was pretty wobblily, but we kept at it and every now and then when we would secure an additional two or three people until the Historic Landmarks Commission began to resemble a college of cardinals or something of that sort.

**Netherton:** Well I want to bring you back to this matter of the standards again, but let me ask you to digress or stop at this point and tell us a little bit about the way that the Landmarks Commission was recruited or constituted and organized. Did you have, for example, a conscious effort to recruit a variety of talents like architects and restorationists, or did you attempt to get geographical representation of the county? You see the kind of thing that I'm asking for here?

**Durham:** Yes, yes of course. Well initially we were looking for people who were knowledgeable in the field. Architects, landscape planners, historians, preservationists. Anything we could find in that regard. There were not so many of them indirectly in the county. If we could've reached into the District of Columbia, we could've found a great many more of course.

**Netherton:** Now how did they when you found one, how did they become– there was a commission, were they officially appointed by the county?

**Durham:** Well it was likened to admission to a men's fraternity or a women's sorority. We would tap them on the shoulder and say, come on be one of us, and they would say, alright I'm very much interested and would like to do it, or they would say, sorry but I haven't got the time.

**Netherton**: (Laughter) Uhuh yep.

**Durham:** So that was very much on the informal ad hoc basis of being tapped for this group. It started out, I don't know how many we just actually had at the beginning. Perhaps a dozen and then it grew and grew and grew until they had, well you can get the exact figure of course.

**Netherton**: That's right. These things are undoubtedly in the minutes of that old Landmarks Preservation Commission and I'm sure I have access to those either from my own collection or what exists somewhere else by now but how big, do you remember just how big it got?

**Durham:** Oh, I don't know. I can be–

**Netherton**: Say by a year or two after it was organized in 1967?

**Durham:** It must have been twenty-five or thirty and it became unwieldy to operate you had to– became almost as large as– operated like the House of Representatives or the Federal Congress. You had to have committees this and committees that.

**Netherton:** Did you indeed follow the county committee structure?

**Durham:** Well we– I don't know how far we got along with them now, but we had to. But as in most things the hard work really revolved upon only a handful of people.

**Netherton:** Now one of the jobs of course that they would've had and felt keenly about I'm sure was this one that we were talking a minute ago. Namely of trying to develop a list or registry and a readopting some criteria to make an evaluation of the historic significance and possibly on that the priority of–

**Durham:** We talked about it. We tried to go about it as professionally as we could and we sought professional guidance every place we got. And we had interior decorators on there who helped us to determine what paint should go where and to what paint was used in a certain period of time and the historic architects of course could tell us when the particular mantel was made and by whom in many cases. So that we– in other words it was not just a hobby or an elite group of people. It was a real labor by a group of people who loved these old buildings and wanted to preserve them for the generations that were to come after them.

**Netherton:** Now how did they bring their talents and their efforts to bear on landmarks? As I recall those days there was a feeling that– and not just by this group but by a lot of organized groups in Fairfax County no matter what their particular field was, a prevalent feeling that all one did was to run around and try to put out brush fires and keep up with the events. Did the Landmarks Commission feel that way and if they did, did they, what did they think was the way that they could get a hold of the initiative and begin to diffuse the situation?

**Durham:** Well that was one of the problems we had. Some of us were very impatient and wanted to get things done overnight. Others were more slow going and cautious and you might say more thorough. But all of us soon began to see that this was not just a kiddie club job, it was a job for thoughtful specialized people and a job that would take a certain amount of money on a sustained basis. Of course later when it was reorganized we got a small amount of money from the county, $25,000, and its budget had remained about that same point over all the years despite the real progress that has been made.

**Netherton:** If you had money from the money county then, that must've meant that the Board of Supervisors had sometime after 1965 when Evans and the group sort of spontaneously came together, the Board must've given them some official recognition status. Is that right?

**Durham:** Well I don't know just–

**Netherton:** Cause the Board couldn't give a private organization money like that. I think it might've–

**Durham:** Well I think as soon as it became evident that we thought we would get– let's put it this way, some of us thought we would get more, we would acquire more clout, not necessarily political clout and if we had the support backing of the county. Well that turned out over the years to be a pipe dream cause although the county was in general support, none of the members of the Board of Supervisors were very enthusiastic about it, let's put it that way.

**Netherton:** You think they realized what was involved during a first-class preservation program in terms of commitment to money and staff and things like that?

**Durham:** Yes. You see, here's an example. We thought we could do better if we were a separate organization. An organization that could keep a certain distance from the Board of Supervisors. We did not want to politicize because after all good

conservatives or good liberals were both interested in preservation of our history. We wanted money for an executive secretary. Well we never got one and somewhere along the line either in the bureaucracy or it may have been in say in the middle bureaucracy they just– not that they actively opposed it so much as if they would just claim to be indifferent, you know? We had trouble getting our minutes typed for example. We got to take minutes. Something that the independent order of Odd Fellows would have no trouble with at all, well it became a great bureaucratic problem and to this day we have to hire our own stenographer. After twenty years, two decades, well this is ridiculous.

**[Recording paused]**

**Netherton:** Well that's a story that's familiar to a good many organizations that have county recognition that are doing good work for the county but somehow always are regarded as out of the main stream of the county's business. Let me take you back to what you said at the very beginning though about the hope that the business community would get interested in this and actively support it. Did you have in mind there something like the Nature Conservancy program of a revolving fund where projects, in this case landmark preservation or restoration, could be taken on and the building when it was renovated or restored could be sold subject to covenants and so on and the proceeds plowed back into the fund then revolve that way or was that idea even considered a parallel between the Nature Conservancy's?

**Durham:** Well I don't think it was considered very much in the early days of the county's Landmark Commission. As you indicated a moment ago, we were so busy trying to run around and put out brush fires to save a certain old house from the bulldozers that we hardly had time to organize properly and to conduct a membership campaign or public relations campaign to get financial aid and support from the general public. So there was very little done at that time and then that probably not until we were reorganized in 1969. I should say perhaps here at this point that you see we were engaged, although we didn't realize it too much at the time, we were engaged in a sort of a balancing act in this respect. What were we? What was our identity? Were we strictly a building preservation group or were we an historic preservation group, which more or less worked with patrium you might say. That is to say records, land records, genealogical tables–

**Netherton:** Archival preservation as well as physical preservation of buildings.

**Durham:** Archival preservation. That sort of thing. We were trying to do both. We were trying to do everything that was connected with the preservation of any piece of history of Fairfax County. Well this in effect divided the group into two factions more or less. Not that they were against either faction, either object, or goal, but they were just plainly more interested in one than the other. Take Bayard Evans for example, he was much more interested in preserving structures than he was in preserving the deed book for the past two-hundred years in Fairfax County or the book of wills or –

**Netherton:** Or what was in the attic of the courthouse, finding that out.

**Durham:** What was in the attic of the courthouse, somebody told me, must've been a million objects up there at one time or another. Simply furnishing food for the rats. Well, both of them were big jobs, but the goals were both reachable. They were enormously big jobs and we were strictly amateurs for the most part. As I said earlier, we did our best to persuade professionals who made their living in the preservation field, but most of us did not have that expertise.

**Netherton:** Do you think that it would've been a better experience, I'll put it that way, if you had been a group of professionals in a variety of fields, an assembly of talents that were able to actually supervise as well as identify work that needed to be done? This is a dilemma it seems to me with any attempt to try to mobilize a community, particularly for something that involves as preservation certainly does a lot of highly technical questions. Is it better for a cross section of the public that's concerned about this to be the spearhead or the catalyst or should it be–

**Durham:** Well I think the only way that I can answer that is to say that in our highly technological society today you've simply got to have specialists.

**Netherton:** As members of your group making the top policy decisions or as the technicians?

**Durham:** And as technicians. And technicians of course helped to make policy and so they should be part of the main group. As you know today we have this Architectural Review Board. Most all of them are architects of one kind or another. Landscape architects.

**Netherton:** But you ask them rather technical questions, don't you? You ask them whether or not a front porch should be saved or can it be taken off in a renovation. You don't ask them the kind of large policy questions.

**Durham:** No.

**Netherton:** And you don't expect them to have their finger on the pulse of a community to set and tell you where the balance between development pressure and heritage preservation should be drawn.

**Durham:** Oh no, of course not. But I think the best thing to say would be you've got to have a mix of those. Of course when you start out knocking bricks around and stone and mortar, wood, why the best policy maker you could find wouldn't be able to do that because he's not a trained craftsman.

**Netherton:** That's right, if he's a good policy maker, he knows when to turn something over to the bricklayers and the engineers.

**Durham:** That's right.

**Netherton:** Yeah. Well in the case of the Landmarks Commission, during its era, as you said though, 1969, you did have a mix. You did have some professional architects, restorationists, and then you had some who were just interested and concerned represented in that sense a trend or a feeling of the time in the community.

**Durham:** Yes.

**Netherton:** And that was the mix that prevailed up until [19]69. Now did it change in [19]69? What happened when you [inaudible] reorganization?

**Durham:** It turned out that the people who were– the Landmarks office was interested in both goals. But there were other people who were interested primarily in the archival goals that is the documentary phase, the written word so to speak. So that when the old Landmarks Commission folded and a new History Commission took over well there was this question, well what do we do with the bricks and mortar crowd, you know? Where do they go?

**Netherton:** Would I be correct here in gathering like you said that one of the reasons for the reorganization was to position the new History Commission so that a broader program, that is to say a program that dealt with preservation of archives, of physical landmarks, of as it turned out eventually then archeological sites, that all of that could be addressed in a single comprehensive program? Was that really what the reorganization was–

**Durham:** Well it wasn't carefully thought out in advance, that was one of the troubles. Nobody said, alright now let's sit down here and do a planning job. There were no planners amongst us.

**Netherton:** Well this is also a failing favorably if you can call it that of the Board of Supervisors and other governing bodies that don't really leave a good legislative history or don't spell out the new mission if that's what they have in mind when they create some new organic documents for one of their bodies.

**Durham:** Yeah, that's right.

**Netherton:** And that I take it is what happened here to some extent because I've read those ordinances that the Board of Supervisors passed, and they don't really give a good answer to the question, the tough question I've just asked you.

**Durham:** No, that's quite right. And as a result of that, I asked my friends on the county Park Authority if they would be interested in having a study made of what role the Park Authority could play in the structural side. That is to say the bricks and mortar side. And as a result, they agreed and they got an old friend of mine who lived in Maryland, Fritz Gutheim, to do our study and he recommended in the end that the Park Authority take over the buildings, the historic buildings, and they established a division of history in the Park Authority just like they have it now in the federal government. The National Park Service has its manager, park manager, its managerial services, but it also has its historians and its archeologists and that sort of thing. So that's the way the park service got into strictly in the business of the historical preservation business and I think that it's worked out very well indeed.

**Netherton:** And that has left the History Commission with what as its main field of activity or the main function that it performs?

**Durham:** Well at the History Commission, it's main goal [is] to preserve the archival resources of the county and also to become a small time banker for local history organizations to aid them in getting postage stamp buying or to aid them in getting stationary or make two or three hundred dollars at a time and that sort of thing. You know, we'd give them seed money so to speak. And this is where it worked very well indeed too. And as a consequence, over the past two decades, there has been– you take this thing in toto, a great deal of work has been done and a great deal of accomplishment has occurred in raising the consciousness of the

citizens of this county for the value of historic preservation although it's been very slow, much to slow for some of us.

**Netherton:** And that's a– I guess you can call it both a mission and an accomplishment, but it may not have been appreciated or even thought of back when the first groups got together and began to say that this matter of historic preservation deserved and had to have organized and systematic and continuous attention.

**Durham:** Yeah, exactly, you're quite right. And we learned that you have to have sustained action, sustained supportive action in a field like that. Otherwise the gates were open, the fence was down, and the cattle are out of the field or they come into the field, either way.

**Netherton:** Has this activity raising public consciousness been limited to I guess what we could call local organizations? Local civic and conservation organizations as distinguished from again back to this hope that Bayard Evans had for the business community. Has the business community begun to realize that they have a stake in history if they would look at it?

**Durham:** Well, they were not interested much in it for a long time after Bayard's death, but as soon as some of them recognized that Fairfax County proved very attractive to tourists, then they could see the value of supporting such an organization but it hasn't transformed itself into any direct benefits from the business community itself.

**Netherton:** I suppose one way might be to enlist the help or the cooperation of the business community and jointly sponsoring with the county commission on various activities, some of which might be the tangible brick and mortar type of support. For example, buying a new set of hinges for a house or paying for, helping to pay for a new mantle or fireplace [inaudible]. And also sponsoring publications, prizes for research on part of students and the schools, things like that. There's probably a whole range of things that they could– one example up from where I live, it turns out as historians now have found out that Seven Corners, the hill there where Jack Koons Ford property is, was a place where Professor Thaddeus Lowe made some of his first balloon ascents in support of the field operations of the Union Army. The first effort to map from an aerial balloon, a topographic map. The first artillery spotting. Jack Koons, I am told, would just love to be asked to pay for a monument or at least a marker to mark that sight. Nobody's asked him yet because a marker program hasn't gotten started yet. But, the story illustrates one of many activities

that the private sector could come in and help and on a basis that it could definitely see the benefit to itself and so there's I'm sure a good deal there that could be laid out as an interface [inaudible] commission, the public commission's work and the private business sector. But I don't think the Fairfax County commission is unique by any means here and not having tapped that. I don't know many in the country that have succeeded–

**Durham:** Oh yes.

**Netherton:** Mobilizing at that [inaudible].

**Durham:** You see we had an executive secretary. Just a little more money to pay for an executive secretary. He could carry on all the housekeeping work and this kind of work too. Public relations, business relations, all that.

**Netherton:** Now and under the old days of the Landmarks Commission, there really never was anything except sort of a coincidental publicity public relations program. When I say coincidental here, you're triggered off by some public hearing or something that–

**Durham:** That's right.

**Netherton:** Would attract the attention for the region.

**Durham:** Exactly.

**Netherton:** What do you think looking back on the– I'm skipping back again to the pre-1969 date, what do you think the Landmarks Commission's biggest impact and the biggest contribution was in its day?

**Durham:** Well I think that it was in connection with the stirring up what little interest we were able to stir up in the business community.

**Netherton:** And in the civic organizations?

**Durham:** And the civic organizations.

**Netherton:** And by the civic organizations, I mean the local historical societies.

**Durham:** Right and the League of the what'd they call it, the Fairfax County Citizens Association.

**Netherton:** Federation of Citizens Association. Yeah.

**Durham:** Things like that. Yeah.

**Netherton:** What about individual landmarks? Are there any victories there that should be remembered particularly?

**Durham:** When they came to that by that time I think the park service had moved in. And with it I believe it cost $750,000 to restore Colvin Run Mill. Though Bayard Evans thought that was crazy. He thought that he could've done it for a tenth of that and maybe he could, I don't know.

**Netherton:** Well of course thinking back to that Colvin Run Mill restoration or rehabilitation whatever it should be called, they ran into a lot of unexpected problems there.

**Durham:** They always do.

**Netherton:** I don't think anybody would've dreamed in the beginning that they would've had to practically hold it up by scaffolding while they replaced about almost half of the brick walls there and a big chunk of the foundation.

**Durham:** Right.

**Netherton:** The Dranesville Tavern was another one that the Landmarks Commission worked on before the Park Authority came into the picture, isn't it?

**Durham:** Well to a very limited degree, yeah.

**Netherton:** Well was the Park Authority committed in that too?

**Durham:** The Park Authority was in there too. They were in both of those and I must say I think they did a good job in both cases.

**Netherton:** Well the Park Authority or whoever it was that was really in charge of scheduling and planning the Dranesville Tavern renovation did– and relocation and renovation I should say because the relocation became important for the point I want to make here, which is that in that particular instance you also had the start of interest in archaeology. You also had your first really successful program or project where the schools and the Landmarks Commission and the Park Authority and also you have to give credit to the Department of Highways, the state highwaymen, all cooperated in making it possible for an archaeological dig to be conducted when that building was moved off its foundation and before the contractor for the highway project was allowed to come in to the property. And that may be an interesting and significant first too in terms of introducing the idea of archaeology.

**Durham:** Right.

**Netherton:** Can you think of any instants before that where archaeology came into–

**Durham:** No.

**Netherton:** The view of activity of the commission?

**Durham:** No, I'm sure very little interest that I remember in archaeology as such.

**Netherton:** And I suppose after that time, even after the Dranesville Tavern dig, it was a slow-moving activity in the–

**Durham:** You see also, the archaeology division right now is still under the Office of Comprehensive Planning and it's not under the History Commission. Although we work together. You see basically what it comes down to is the History Commission is an advisory commission, it's a policy shaping group. It's not an outbringing hands-on type of commission.

**Netherton:** And yet that's the way it started I gather from what you said that the initial efforts were really a type of hands on rescue effort where the commission was prepared either by bringing in its consultants or by having its own members give advice and if necessary go out and help supervise and make some of the engineering decisions that would have to be done on the work site.

**Durham:** Yeah.

**Netherton:** Let me ask you then, is that one of the significant changes as you see it that occurred in the reorganization? Was the commission after the organization purposefully steered into more of an advisory role than a what do you call it a managerial role?

**Durham:** No, it's still a policy shaping organization with a tad of operation program and what not. We still are almost an idea organization you might say. You see we still have this register to keep up. We go over that every once in a while and subtract.

**Netherton:** Why would you subtract from the register aside from the fact that it may disappear and be demolished that's a good reason of course? (Laughter)

**Durham:** After a bulldozer hits it why somebody has to subtract it.

**Netherton:** Well I was curious to see just what the policy was or what the approach was to maintain the register?

**Durham:** The list is still active but it's getting to the point now where you have to keep someone pretty close to it almost all the time because change is inevitable, you see. And there's always something about one area of the county or another. Now the big thrust of development is in the west end of the county and we don't have the personnel. If we had any as an operating agency, we still wouldn't have enough personnel to cover going down there and searching and finding these old places and studying them in an effort to preserve them. Again they could be gone over in a weekend by the ball and chain people. They go in there with a big ball and knock them down.

**Netherton:** Well that whole subject of the role of the register and the role of the commission using this register as a combination of a dividing rod and yard stick for preservation is something I'd like to–

**[end of transcription]**

**Transcribed by Chris Barbuschak, May 2020**